

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00
NSCE-00 PM-05 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00
EB-08 DODE-00 L-03 /089 W
-----006260 271923Z /72

O P 271230Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 800

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NY PRIORITY

COMIDEASTFOR

USS FOX

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 434

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PDIP, MOPS, ASEC, DJ, ET, SO

SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN CHARGES OF U.S. CONNIVANCE WITH SOMALIA LINKED
TO NEW CAMPAIGN OF PRESSURE ON DJIBOUTI.

REF: (A) ADDIS ABABA 1382 (NOTAL) (B) DJIBOUTI 422

(C) DJIBOUTI 367 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. PRESS CAMPAIGN BY ETHIOPIA INTENDED TO LINK
U.S. AND SOMALIS IN "PLOT" TO SUBVERT DJIBOUTI HAS NOT YET
CREATED A CONSIDERABLE ECHO IN DJIBOUTI. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS
THAT ACCUSATIONS ARE DIRECTLY LINKED TO NEW CAMPAIGN TO COUNTERACT
SOMALI INFLUENCE IN DJIBOUTI AND TO PREPARE GROUND FOR RETURN OF
AHMED DINI, FORMER DJIBOUTI PREMIER NOW IN ADDIS.

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2. CHARGE WAS IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE SUNDAY AFTERNOON,
26 MARCH, WHEN MINISTER WAS HANDED AFP DISPATCH FROM ADDIS
ABABA IN WHICH THE U.S. WAS ACCUSED BY THE EPMG OF PLOTTING
AGAINST DJIBOUTI, IN LEAGUE WITH SOMALIA. PRIME MINISTER
ABDALLAH KAMIL NOTED THAT HE HAD BEEN DISTURBED BY ABSENCE MENTION
DJIBOUTI IN EARLIER STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT. HOWEVER, HE TOOK

THE CHARGE OF U.S. DUPLICITY WITH SOMALIA WITH A SMILE, BUT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT INTENTIONS ETHIOPIA IN MAKING SUCH A WILD CHARGE. FORTUNATELY, CHARGE HAD RECEIVED THE ADDIS MSG (REFTEL A) JUST BEFORE GOING TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, AND WAS ABLE TO CITE THE VARIOUS EFFORTS TAKEN TO ASSURE THE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES ABOUT OUR STAND ON DJIBOUTI. ON THE MATTER OF WHY DJIBOUTI WAS OMITTED FROM THE MAP IN THE ORIGINAL STATEMENT, THE CHARGE TOOK NOTE OF OUR DESIRE TO BE PRUDENT, NOT TO GET DJIBOUTI INVOLVED, ETC. THIS PRETTY LIMP STUFF, AND IT WOULD TRULY BE INTERESTING TO KNOW HOW THIS BROUHAHA GOT STARTED.

. ON MONDAY MORNING, 27 MARCH, FRENCH AMBASSADOR BASTOUIL CAME TO MY OFFICE SOMEWHAT IN A DITHER ABOUT THE MATTER. HE PROVIDED THE CHARGE WITH A COPY OF THE AFP ARTICLE, WITH A TRANSLATION AN AMHARIC BROADCAST FROM ADDIS ABABA MADE AT 2100 LOCAL ON 26 MARCH, RECOUNTING THE LATEST VERSION OF OUR ALLEGED DUPLICITY WITH THE SOMALIS. THE CHARGE AGAIN WENT OVER SOME OF THE HISTORY OF THE STATEMENT ON THE HORN AND THE EFFORTS TO COUNTERACT ETHIOPIAN MISCONCEPTIONS. AMBASSADOR BASTOUIL SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET HAD A REACTION ON THE MATTER FROM PRESIDENT HASSAN GOULED, WHO IS SICK IN BED, BUT THAT I COULD EXPECT AN EARLY CALL FROM THE PALACE TO DISCUSS THE BUSINESS.

4. IN THE OPINION OF AMBASSADOR BASTOUIL, THE EXCITED ETHIOPIAN CAMPAIGN IS LINKED TO TWO SPECIFIC MATTERS OF CONCERN TO THE ETHIOPIANS. THE FIRST IS THE CONTINUED PRESENCE IN DJIBOUTI OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SULTAN ALI MIRAH, WHO IS ENGAGED IN A FAIRLY INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN TO RALLY THE AFARS AGAINST THE ETHIOPIANS. THE SECOND PROBLEM IS THE PRESENCE IN DJIBOUTI REPUBLIC OF SOME 300 OR SO (FIGURE PROVIDED BY PRIME MINISTER KAMIL) WEST SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT GUERRILLA FIGHTERS WHO HAVE TAKEN REFUGE HERE FOLLOWING THE SOMALI COLLAPSE IN THE NORTHERN OGADEN. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RECENT REPORTS OF SKIRMISHES WITH WSLF OR SOMALI STRAGGLERS NEAR BOTH HARAR AND DIRE DAWA, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT ETHIOPIA WOULD LIKE TO HAVE DONE WITH THESE IRRITATIONS. THE ALI MIRAH PROBLEM IS NO SMALL PROBLEM EITHER TO THE ETHIOPIANS INsofar AS THE AFAR LIBERATION FRONT STILL HAS SOME FOLLOWERS IN ETHIOPIA.

5. THE ETHIOPIANS HAD EARLIER ASKED PRIME MINISTER KAMIL IF THEY COULD SEND A SUBSTANTIAL DELEGATION FROM ADDIS ON THE WEEKLY FLIGHT (TUESDAYS) ARRIVING 28 MARCH. ASSUMING THAT THE ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION WISHED TO DISCUSS THE REOPENING OF THE RAILWAY, THE DJIBOUTIANS GAVE THEIR AGREEMENT. IT NOW APPEARS POSSIBLE THAT THE DELEGATION MAY ALSO PROVIDE PROTECTIVE COVER FOR THE RETURN OF AHMED DINI TO THE COUNTRY (SEE REFTEL B). ACCORDING TO GOOD SOURCES, DINI HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH A LARGE SUM OF MONEY TO ESTABLISH A LEGAL SOCIALIST PARTY IN DJIBOUTI. HIS ARRIVAL WITH THE ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION WOULD PRESUMEDLY PREVENT THE GOVERNMENT OR

CERTAIN MINISTERS FROM PRECIPITATING HIS ARREST. IN REGARD TO THE AFAR CLAIM THAT AN ARREST ORDER FOR DINI HAS BEEN ISSUED (REFTEL B), THERE NOW APPERS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT THAT SUCH AN ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN. THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE CHARGE ON 26 MARCH THAT HE DOUBTED THAT SUCH AN ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN, BUT THAT IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT SOME OTHER ACTION AGAINST DINI MIGHT BE CONTEMPLATED BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND/OR THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

6. COMMENT. IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO GET OUT FROM THE MIDDLE OF THIS PARTICULAR CONTROVERSY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. OBVIOUSLY, THE ETHIOPIANS HAVE SEIZED UPON A LAPSE ON OUR PART, AND THEY WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT IT TO THE MAXIMUM FOR THEIR OWN ENDS. THERE ARE ALSO MANY PEOPLE IN MOGADISCIO WHO ARE HAVING SOME AMUSEMENT AT
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OUR DISCOMFITURE. ONE SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEM WAS PROPOSED IN REFTTEL C, A GENERAL STATEMENT DEALING WITH A NUMBER OF CONCERNS ON THE HORN OF AFRICA. WE STILL THINK THAT, ALTHOUGH TARDY, SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD

BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND HAS THE EXTRA ADVANTAGE OF GORING ALL THE OXEN IN SIGHT. A SECOND ACTION IS ALSO VERY NECESSARY.

THERE HAS BEEN A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY GOING ON IN THE HORN FOR SOME MONTHS NOW. AT NO POINT HAS THE DEPARTMENT ACKNOWLEDGED THE SPECIAL INTERESTS OF DJIBOUTI IN THE SOLUTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN PROPOSED OTHER THAN OUR ABORTIVE EFFORT TO BRING MATTER TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL. GIVEN THE FACT THAT SOME OF THE BLAME FOR THE PRESENT FIASCO MUST FALL ON US FOR THE OPENING PROVIDED THE ETHIOPIANS, A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO EITHER THE PRESIDENT OR THE PRIME MINISTER OF DJIBOUTI SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY JUST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. LIKE MOST SMALL COUNTRIES, THERE ARE NO SMALL MATTERS IN DJIBOUTI, AND THE WORST THING THAT WE CAN DO IS TO IGNORE COMPLETELY THEIR NARROW RANGE OF INTERESTS. SUCH A MESSAGE SHOULD ASSURE THE DHIBOUTIANS THAT WE SUPPORT THEIR INDEPENDENCE, THAT WE HAVE TAKEN A SPECIAL INTEREST IN SEEING THE RESTORATION OF NORMAL RAIL TRAFFIC AND THAT WE CONTINUE OUR INTENSIVE EFFORTS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE AID PROJECTS FOR DJIBOUTI. SOME MENTION SHOULD BE MADE OF VARIOUS DEMARCHES MADE IN ADDIS AND MOGADISCIO.

7. REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON THESE PROPOSALS ASAP.
CLARKE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, ALLEGATIONS, PLOTS, PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DJIBOU00434
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780133-0246
Format: TEL
From: DJIBOUTI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780323/aaaaatam.tel
Line Count: 162
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bfc112bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 ADDIS ABABA 1382, 78 DJIBOUTI 422, 78 DJIBOUTI 367
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3197691
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ETHIOPIAN CHARGES OF U.S. CONNIVANCE WITH SOMALIA LINKED TO NEW CAMPAIGN OF PRESSURE ON DJIBOUTI.
TAGS: PBOR, PDIP, MOPS, ASEC, DJ, ET, SO, US, WSLF, (MIRAH, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bfc112bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014